

Maurice Hinchey NEWS

26TH CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT, NEW YORK

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
February 26, 2002

Contact: Kevin O'Connell
202-225-6335

HINCHEY AND FEMA TO HOLD WORKSHOPS ON FIREFIGHTERS ASSISTANCE GRANT PROGRAM

WASHINGTON - U.S. Representative Maurice Hinchey (D-NY) today announced that he has scheduled workshops in Ulster and Sullivan counties at which representatives from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) will help fire departments apply for federal funds. The workshops will take place on Tuesday, March 5 in Ithaca, Wednesday, March 6 in Monticello, and Friday, March 8 in Kingston.

"In the wake of September 11th we've become very aware of the increased needs of first-responders," said Hinchey. "Grants available through this program can be a big help to a fire department. There will be a great deal of competition for the funds, so interested companies would be wise to take advantage of these workshops."

Hinchey has been a strong supporter of the Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program, which is now in its second year. Upon learning that the Bush Administration's initial budget request for Fiscal Year 2002 did not include any funding for the program, Hinchey and several of his colleagues wrote to the president, urging him to reconsider that decision. The president's budget request was subsequently amended and Congress appropriated \$360 million to the program, more than tripling the previous year's allocation.

Assistance is available in four categories: fire operations and firefighter safety, fire prevention, emergency medical services, and firefighting vehicles. Fire departments interested in applying for grants should call the toll free information line at 866-274-0960 or visit the website www.usfa.fema.gov/grants. Applications must be submitted between March 1 and April 1, 2002. At the workshops, FEMA officials will explain in clear and concise language how to complete the application.

In the program's first year, six grants were awarded to fire departments in New York's 26th Congressional District for a total of over \$225,000.